

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on February 1, 2011, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 1, 4, 16 and 19-26 are amended, no claims are cancelled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1-26 are now pending in this application.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank Examiner Gauthier for discussing during a telephone interview on April 27, 2011, the § 102 rejection of the claims of the present application with respect to the cited art. While no specific agreement was reached with regard to allowability, Applicants believe the discussion was very helpful in furthering prosecution of the present case.

§ 102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-26 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bremer (U.S. Patent No. 6,018,671). Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 16 to more clearly recite the claimed subject matter. In so far as the rejection applies to the claims, as amended, Applicants respectfully traverse as follows. Support for the present amendments is provided at least by paragraphs [0008] and [0018] of the as-filed application.

The Non-Final Office Action mailed on February 1, 2011 cites the Bremer reference as teaching “a system control circuit . . . capable of communication with the voice communication device.” (Pages 2-3). From Applicants’ review, the Bremer reference appears to teach preventing the remote device from receiving voice messages (e.g., audio or sound) from a caller when a call is placed into a nonactive call state. Furthermore, Bremer’s reference appears to teach that the nonactive call state includes blocking the microphone and *speaker* of the remote device from communicating with the transmitter and receiver of the central device. (Column 3, lines 40-49)(emphasis added). Bremer does not teach allowing a user to

listen to the voice messages received via the voice communication device as the voice message is being received.

In contrast, independent claim 1, as amended, presently recites:

An apparatus for interactively replying to voice messages received via a voice communication device, which comprises:

a memory, wherein the memory is capable of storing multiple personalized vocal responses and a written synopsis of each stored, personalized vocal response;

a store/playback device connected to the memory, wherein the store/playback device is capable of storing the personalized vocal responses in the memory; and

a system control circuit connected to the store/playback device, wherein the system control circuit is capable of communication with the voice communication device including allowing a user to listen to the voice messages received via the voice communication device while the voice message is being received, has capability to select a specified stored, personalized vocal response in reply to a playback command initiated by the user, and has capability to playback, via the system control circuit, the specified stored, personalized vocal response to the voice communication device in reply to the command while the voice message is being received.

Independent claim 16, as amended, presently recites:

A method, which comprises the method steps of:
receiving a voice message from a caller via a voice communication device connected to a voice communication system, including allowing a user to listen to the voice message received via the voice communication device as the voice message is being received; and

selecting a personalized vocal response as the voice message is being received, wherein the personalized vocal response is selected from multiple personalized vocal responses previously stored in a memory and wherein the selected personalized vocal response is chosen based upon the content of the voice message received; and

playing back the selected personalized vocal response to the voice communication device as the voice message is being received; and

repeating the above method steps until the caller disconnects from the voice communication system.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Bremer does not teach or suggest each and every element of Applicants' independent claims 1 and 16, as amended. As such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102 rejection of independent claims 1 and 16, as amended, as well as those claims that depend therefrom.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' attorney Edward J. Brooks III at (612) 236-0120 to facilitate prosecution of this matter.

At any time during the pendency of this application, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to the Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR §1.8:

The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being electronically deposited with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on this 2nd day of

May, 2011.

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